DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 096 228 SO 007 770

AUTHOR	Hadjisky, Maryellen G . Ed.; Stroll, Florence B., Ed.
TITLE	Peace Education in the Pre-School Years: A Mental Health Approach. Pre-School Project.
INSTITUTION	Wayne State Univ., Detroit, Mich. Center for Teaching About Peace and War.
PUB DATE	72
NOTE	24p.; "We Teach our Kids Violence," an article from The Detroit Free Press was removed in compliance with copyright regulations; SO 007 769 is a related document
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	*Conflict; Early Childhood Education; *Mental Health; *Peace; Preschool Education; Program Descriptions; Research; Resource Materials; *War; Workshops

ABSTRACT

The Center for Teaching about Peace and War at Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, was established to further new approaches for the study of peace and war on all educational levels and to collect and disseminate information on the subject. The Pre-School Project, which marks the Centers' beginning effort in the mental health disciplines, is based on the conviction that deep feelings about aggressive impulses and characteristic ways of dealing with conflict are learned in early childhood. The Pre-School Project and the programs it offers parents, teachers, and students are described in this publication. Excerpts of speeches given at workshops initiated by the project comprise a major portion of the booklet. (Author/RM)

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Peace Education
In the Pre-School Years
A Mental Health Approach

Center for Teaching About Peace and War

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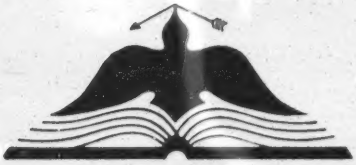
ED 096228

Peace Education
In the Pre-School Years
A Mental Health Approach

Pre-School Project

edited by Maryellen G. Hadjisky
and Florence B. Stroll



Introduction

The Center for Teaching About Peace and War at Wayne State University was established in 1965 to further new approaches for the study of peace and war on all educational levels, to collect information on the subject from as many places and disciplines as possible and to disseminate this information as widely as possible. The Pre-School Project marks the Center's beginning effort in the mental health disciplines.

A majority of professions in the mental health field are dedicated to the belief that *peace* in our society is a constructive mental health force. Along with the psychological and physiological survival needs of children, there is another area in which we should have a more active role: in lending our skills and in taking responsibility for developing programs on Peace Education on all levels.

No longer can we remain at the level of theoretical debate on the nature of conflict and aggression. No longer can we escape from the violence portrayed in all its brutality in our daily lives. It is our belief that only man himself can take the responsibility toward building a peaceful life with his fellowman. We agree that: "War is a social institution and not inevitably rooted in the nature of man." (*Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry* Report 1964)

Learning to be peace-loving does not begin in the United Nations; it begins with the young child who is taught and influenced by those around him. Accordingly, we need to reach out to parent groups and to teachers of the very young and to develop programs to present to them. The Pre-School Project is only a beginning.

Finding socially acceptable ways to express internal impulses is not a new concept; but the greater need is to implement effective programs. Those of us who abhor war and violence, who want to devote ourselves to the cause of world peace, should pool our professional knowledge and skills. If we agree with UNESCO that "War is in the minds of men," then the mental health professions have their share of responsibility.

Included in this booklet are excerpts of speeches, an interview, and an article — all dealing with peace education. The contributors are from different disciplines, with unique styles, and were selected for their competence in the pre-school area. They are all in agreement that peace education should begin here. *April 1972*

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Pre-School Project*

Out of the recognition that education and understanding about conflict and conflict-resolution begins very early in life, the *Pre-School Project* was initiated in 1970 as a program directed by the Center Associates. Its efforts are based on the conviction that deep feelings about aggressive impulses and characteristic ways of dealing with conflict are learned in the impressionable years of earliest childhood.

In the light of increasing violence and social unrest in our nation and in our world, there is an urgent need to stimulate thought about raising children who value kindness and consideration and are free to consider ways other than physical attack to resolve personal differences and to meet day-to-day social problems.

Realizing that conflict experiences are universal to all people, parents of very young children and behavioral scientists have much to offer each other. To facilitate productive exchange of ideas between these groups, the Pre-School Project offers programs at a variety of levels:

1. Workshops offering material about conflict-resolution find common ground with the continuing concerns of the co-operatives and other pre-schools with "aggressive children," discipline, authority, use of play materials. Such programs serve to complement the already existing consultant and child guidance services.
2. A pool of co-op alumnae of a variety of backgrounds and talents is available to lead discussions related to the interests of individual co-ops (as suggested by board members of Greater Detroit Co-operative Nursery Council).
3. Reference materials for adults *and* for very young children are available.
4. Public Affairs forums are offered, some related to pre-schoolers, others to youth, and to concerned citizens generally.
5. Research in attitudes of pre-schoolers about day-to-day social problems and a shared documentation of these by parents, teachers, and behavioral scientists is planned for the future.

*This is a leaflet distributed at workshops and included a list of recommended readings for adults and children.

Workshops Initiated by the Pre-School Project

The Pre-School Project initiated contact in the fall of 1970 with the boards of the two largest and most active pre-school organizations in the Detroit area — Detroit Association for the Education of Young Children; and the Greater Detroit Cooperative Nursery Council. Considerable interest was shown by the boards in programs about aggression and conflict-resolution for mid-winter and spring 1971. In one group it was possible to integrate our speakers with a program already planned on Discipline, to be presented by a psychologist from a local child guidance clinic. The publicity sent by this organization to its membership, as a result, billed as a series of three meetings, was based on these premises:

> Discipline is one part of the larger problem of conflict.
> Conflict is a universal experience for all people.

Proceedings

On 9 February 1971, our first speaker, Harold Wright, MD, presented: "Conflict: Its Meanings and Resolutions, Infancy through Kindergarten" as the second of the series for the Detroit Association for the Education of Young Children. He reviewed material from studies and clinical experience with emotionally disturbed children and dealt with a number of questions from the preceding meeting on Discipline. His presentation was in the best tradition of the clinical approach in the children's field.

Two more workshops were furnished for these pre-school organizations by the project. The speakers were William C. Morse, PhD, and Frank Parcells, MD. Excerpts follow in that order.

Conflict Resolution in the Nursery School
by William C. Morse, PhD
20 February 1971

Peace does not start at the Paris peace talks. It starts in the minds of kids and in the relationships that are generated in our own minds, in our own comfort about life, and in our ways of dealing

with it. It's really a problem of socialization. So what we are talking about is aggression as the negative half, maybe, of socialization.

The problem of socialization — trying to help kids learn to live with themselves and with other people . . . If we don't do this a little better — I'd say a lot better . . . we may not survive . . . We either solve this problem, learn how to help children manage their aggressive impulses and handle conflict in more reasonable ways, or we just won't have a society like we've known it.

We have to be careful when we talk about, "how do we get rid of aggression?" Because, if we get rid of all aggression, we've gotten rid of the substance of the Self . . . Our point of view is that we want a modulation and a balance . . . When you interact you get into conflict . . . We ask only to modulate, integrate, and handle unreasonable aggression.

There are tremendous individual differences in the reactive style of children, and these seem to be biological-temperamental differences . . . These differences seem to be part of us . . . some of us are impulsive, and some are recessive and quiet . . . We have not done enough to recognize these differences. Somehow there is an idea that education makes us more alike, when actually it makes us more different, each in his own unique way. And, if we don't think of each child as a unique going concern, then we are not liable to help him find his particular way of modulating his aggression so that he can get along with others in a reasonable sort of way.

We must come to know those youngsters, their natures and their differences . . . Some will socialize easily with hardly any effort; to others it comes hard. They are not all at the same point when they come to you in school. They are also uneven day by day; with the little ones, it's moment by moment or I'd even say second by second. They change so much . . . There are both the (1) individual differences, and (2) the developmental process in socialization.

The youngster cries . . . you try to meet his interest, you try to find out what's the matter with him. This indulgence we think of as essential in order to start . . . If what you need, when you can't get it on your own, is not responded to by your environment, you're not going to see the value of being interested in people. The whole capacity to become a social being is decreased . . . So, indulgence is the beginning of life. He learns that his message-sending is worthwhile, because people do respond to him, and this begins the whole

socialization process . . . The second stage is the tapering off . . . As they get older they should be gradually introduced to the fact that you don't always get what you want whenever you want it . . . The narcissistic and omnipotent nature of children is part of the developmental process; if you don't begin to taper that off and modulate it, then you have one who develops tremendous ability to manipulate the environment . . .

Now, another problem is the whole behavior that comes from the outside . . . It's interesting that either extreme — in a permissive home you get more aggression, and in a restrictive, punitive home you get more aggression . . . You know, all of us are aggressive. Who has no aggression just a little bit below the surface? . . . Our feelings are very important here; but, both high punishment homes and high restrictive homes and high permissive homes produce this over-flow in the nursery.

There is a lot of what we call emotional exploration in young children . . . They grab you, hug you, kiss you, they say, "I love you," or hit you and say, "I hate you!" . . . They try to figure out the nature of these concepts that we use . . . There's a lot of exploration, and a lot of this can be fantasy . . .

Then we have the business of frustration and aggression, like being temporarily frustrated by not going out to play . . . or when a kid takes an idle truck and then every other kid suddenly wants it . . . This sets a whole lot of things going. And, you want to do what you want so much; it's often hard to do without damaging somebody, and *right there* is where you start to teach a code of behavior.

There is the phenomenon of "mass contagion" in groups of children; one will start something and the emotional pitch gets higher and higher . . . Soon, all the kids are screaming and yelling; some who are frightened just sit and look at this mass business . . . You have to have some counterbalance . . . and, the adult has to get in on the act.

Another thing is that youngsters get some of the aggression out in parallel modeling. One child is beginning to use other children for his style of life . . . Somebody yells "Shut up!" and a kid who has never said this . . . tries it on for size. If somebody is astonished that he did it, he gets a big bang out of it . . .

There is also a great deal of aggression which is attention-

getting . . This attention-getting may bring punishment and getting punishment as a response from others removes the sense of non-being. If somebody interacts with you, that's more of a being than you had before. We don't exist without communication.

There is also aggression for survival. A lot of kids feel so overwhelmed by the threat of the environments where they're growing up, that they think that they have to be aggressive just *to be* . . . It's motivated by fear of being obliterated. A kid who has three or four older brothers all giving him a hard time, may think that the only thing he can do is to be aggressive.

There should be enough fun and pleasure in the environment, so that whatever you have to do to control the overaggressive members does not become the main characteristic of the total environment . . . If you have good positive enjoyment in the environment, then some of the things you have to do about aggression are not as disastrous as they would be if there wasn't anything else . . .

Our basic problem is how do you teach kids to cope with the situation, rather than just stop the surface behavior. You can't teach them to cope with it without understanding . . . Not coping with we *we see*, but with what *they feel*. And, the problem is how to get information from the youngsters to know what we have to start with. We watch, we talk with them, we listen and we study them to get cues. It's interesting that many young children don't look at your face as much as they listen to the tone of your voice. When they're older the face becomes very important, but the little ones are tuned in on sound rather than what you are expressing in your facial gestures.

We must not counter their aggression by counter-aggression . . . Sometimes adults demonstrate the very thing that we say we are trying to eliminate in the child's repertoire . . . They model after us . . . And the whole business of identifying is seeing the way we solve the problem — the way we behave in handling aggression. We must do it in such a way that we demonstrate how to behave not in words but in action.

Then, there's the problem of empathy — figuring out what is really going on with their feelings. One of the biggest sins of adults is to deny the reality of the child's feelings because it isn't appropriate . . . We should not teach kids deceit about feelings . . . Often

adults teach the child that he must not acknowledge his affect, thereby robbing him of the capacity for a reasonable emotional life. This is where our society has started off in the wrong direction . . . It does not mean we accept behavior that cannot be tolerated in the situation . . . You acknowledge the reality of the child's feelings, and that's the beginning of empathy . . . You give him the right to his feelings, you don't deny them. You still have to stop his behavior, and then you still have to discuss with him how the other kid feels . . . That is the beginning of the socialization process, beyond the maangement of the child. We have a code not to hurt other people, to respect their rights . . . We may have to bodily restrict his freedom, but the benign-ness and mellowness and personal concern for him make the difference.

There are a lot of kids who learn to behave, but they grow up to hate their behavior. They behave out of fear . . . We want them to behave out of empathy for the other person. I think this is a life-long task . . . We live in an age of instant everything . . . instant socialization — it just is not that way!

We are searching for ways which will enhance the child's self-esteem; make him trust himself and his feelings, as being something he can communicate to another human being without threat; so that he doesn't close himself off, and that he's worthwhile. And we're really aiming for him to develop gradually, over a period of time, an awareness that his being separate from other beings is not really that separate. He's part of other people, and other people have feelings, too; his are mirrored in other human beings.

We must be very afraid of aggression, and we must be very afraid of it in ourselves . . . We're afraid when children express aggression . . . You've got to understand, talk these things out — the aggression and difference in style — because they are always in the picture.

The affective life, which is the substance of socialization, is there all the time. You cannot avoid it, you can repress it, you can ignore it, but you are teaching something about affect even if you ignore it, because kids are learning patterns about themselves and other people; roles and relationships are being taught by the conditions.

What a child learns from us is far less from our words than

from our behavior. If we are to teach children to manage their aggression, we will start out by managing our own.

Further Thoughts on Aggression
by Frank Parcells, MD
6 March 1971

The point is that you are involved in some of the most crucial experiences that this group of human beings is ever going to have — and all of it apparently consciously forgotten. And there you are, right guts-bold in the center of it. If you're trying to figure out how you're going to get around to a peaceable, integrated world, this is exactly where you've got to begin your thinking.

[*On Aggression — Hostility — Sadism**]

. . . As I said, around the turn of the century, Freud developed a concept which was essentially a libido theory. He was a pan-sexuality guy who opened up the subject of sexuality in child development. What he left out of it, of course, was a theory of aggression. He looked upon aggression as simply a reflex reaction of frustration — if you couldn't get your pleasure, you got a mad on. At that point, he had a kind of single drive theory. Then later, about 1920, he developed what is now known as a dual instinct theory. That was also the point at which he developed a theory of a death instinct or a hostility or a killer instinct, and began to include that as a basic drive in men.

Now back in the time of the *Three Contributions* (Freud 1920) he was talking about sadism and masochism. Sadism and masochism are something of a different bag. The reason we want to distinguish aggression, hostility, sadism, masochism is that they are not just different words, they are different phenomena. We all have them in different portions, and we've all got to deal with them. Now, what is the difference between aggression and sadism? There are many day-by-day examples of it.

If someone is running after a ball, trying to beat out another kid, you say: "Well, there's a good kid, he's very aggressive. He's got a lot of spark, zip, get-up-and-go. He's a real terrier." And that's not all bad, nobody's objecting to that, provided it can be dealt with.

Then there's the kid who, in order to get there, just as a

*[Editor's headings in brackets.]

practical matter, trips the kid next to him on the way to the ball. We say: "Well now." That's being aggresive all right, but that's aggression turned toward a person and that is a hostile thing to do. "That's a non-no." We don't allow that in the game, especially if you get caught.

Now, if he is pursuing the ball, turns around and trips a kid and that kid goes down and bashes his head against something, and *he* trips over the ball because he's laughing so hard, then we call that sadism. What that means is that he is also taking a great deal of satisfaction out of the suffering of another individual . . . In Micky Spillane terms, it's not only shooting that guy between the eyes, it's watching the blood run out of the eyeballs that gives that sense of inner satisfaction.

Now, in the era of the toddler and three and four-year-old, what you're dealing with are youngsters who have various levels of drive, libidinal and aggressive drives in varying forms, and with the matter of how this drive is directed toward objects. Is it hostility? Is it aggression, but not necessarily destructive? Or is it that phase characterized by the satisfaction in the suffering of another individual? . . . It is with this latter area, in the understanding and management of sadism that we must concern ourselves.

[*On Training Dogs and People**]

. . . How many of you have ever taken your dog to a dog training school? It's fascinating — everyone should try it. You walk in with your dog on a leash. There are about 40 people and 40 dogs, and it's not that big a gym. The dogs are peeing on the floor, tugging on a leash, barking, grabbing at other dogs, and there is always somebody who brings one in heat. It's chaos. The opening of kindergarten is nothing compared to this.

A few ground rules are introduced. They're very interesting ones. First of all, an absolute flat-out requirement: if you swing at your dog or treat it in any way that is physically punitive, you're out of the class. You are almost equally out of the class if you use food as an inducement to good behavior. So, then, you're without portfolio. How in the world do you train him?

Here are the do's. First of all, you have to have a dog who for some reason happens to like you. You feed him because you like him, you want him to survive, and you have fun with him. You let

him know you like him; he has his ways of letting you know he likes you. That's the beginning. Then, you train dogs seriously, only for what you want them to learn, maybe 10-15 minutes a day. But you never miss a day. During this time, you never give a command that you are not prepared to have carried out. You only do this with the dog on a leash, so that you can be sure that he hears and does what he hears. Now, it's not a matter of telling dogs they're bad if they don't do it. You make them do it. They have no alternative . . . You may or may not tell the dog he's good. Only after this has gone on and on and on until it's perfectly clear, does one begin to work with a loose leash, a long leash, and then no leash. Every time it doesn't work, you go back to another week with a leash. Until you see the beautifully trained dog who runs up to his owner, bounds around, doesn't hide under the furniture when you come into the house. Lovely dogs to have around. The people who train them love them; it's just a lovely thing.

I'm sure as I describe this, it's evident that many parents and teachers have not got this in order yet. You all know people who try to discipline a three-year-old from across the room or upstairs. You can hear them half-way down the block yelling and screaming. Just like a dog off-leash, try to get him to behave. And all of us who work with children know there is nothing like physical presence. If there is difficulty, above all else, you've got to be there. How can you raise children without fences? Fences not only make good neighbors, but they are an essential element in working with kids. You've got to have limits.

. . . . Furthermore, the idea of punitiveness as a way of dealing with badness or misbehavior, those things that are an integral part of a youngster, is unfortunately archaic and ordinarily represents a basic lack of understanding . . . that 99 per cent of our learning is out of success, not out of failure.

[*Current Concerns**]

by Esther Callard, PhD

16 February 1971

At a luncheon meeting, Esther Callard, PhD, one of our project consultants, informally answered the questions of the small group of co-operative nursery school alumnae who were to head discussions

*[Editor's headings in brackets.]

at the request of individual co-ops. The following is a condensed version of the discussion:

You asked me to tell your about current concerns of the co-operative nursery school. When you lead discussions, here are the questions you'll get:

First: Should we tell the kids to hit back? In other words is there a place for aggression versus injustice?

Second: It's a competitive world. Do you want to do away with competition?

Third: Are you being aggressive against your own child if you use physical punishment?

Fourth: Isn't it helpful for a kid to let off steam? In other words, the catharsis model.

Fifth: What about gun play?

Sixth: Isn't verbal aggression better?

We know how to plan quiet activities, but we don't do good programming for four-and-a-half-year-old boys. We do not think enough about support of the non-aggressive child . . .

There are young parents and teachers with real conflicts about aggression in terms of individual self-expression, doing your own thing versus group rights. Somewhat like the old structured versus free-play controversy in the nursery education field . . .

The co-op is the forum for the young mother . . .

Co-op alumnae: In Maryland, each co-op used to review its rules at the end of the year. Isn't that done in Michigan?

Callard: No. It would be a good idea. There would be much more security with procedures if policies were evaluated annually. After all, in the co-op, parents and teachers need each other.

Peace Materials for Pre-Schoolers

An attempt was made to find appropriate readings of interest, some of which adults could use with young children. It was recommended that these books "be used to stimulate discussion, for at best they supplement the *behavior* of adults and other children in real life situations involving conflict and aggression."

Such books as the series on *Francis The Badger* by Russell Hoban (Harper and Row), *The Quarreling Book* by Charlotte Zolotow (Harper and Row), and others have been used for years in the pre-school setting in the best child development tradition.

Another use of books and other peace materials is illustrated in the following excerpts:

> Inside the classroom and out, national heroes throughout the world have traditionally been war heroes. The high priority given war values in the scheme of socialization has always been costly for both the child and society. But with the advent of nuclear weapons, it has become intolerable . . . We must find a new departure, one which has peaceful achievements rather than military victories as its referent experience . . .
>
> It is time to pay tribute to peace heroes . . . With this end in view, The Center for Teaching About Peace and War has organized the program "Heroes for the Nuclear Age," which honors through an award contemporary heroes and heroines who, as living examples of courage applied creatively, provide inspiration models for a new consciousness and patriotism, one that reaches out beyond national boundaries to encompass all mankind. [Genser 1970, "Heroes and Models."]

The "Heroes" program had as a further objective, to publicize specific teaching materials and develop new resources. At the pre-school level, this included such books as *The Tomato Patch* by William Wondriska (Holt, Rinehart & Winston), *The General* by Janet Charters and Michael Foreman (E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.), *Potatoes, Potatoes* by Anita Lobel (Harper and Row), *The Picture*

Life of Martin Luther King, Jr., by Margaret Young (Franklin Watts, Pub.), and others.

> There were about 10 children, their teacher and a couple of students. They had come to see a "Peace Center." I showed them *Potatoes, Potatoes* which is an attractive picture book and read them the story of how an old woman with her cellar full of potatoes persuades her two sons and their fellow soldiers to cease fighting and return to their homes in peace. Then we made puppets from potatoes and the children acted out the story. Afterwards, I remember, they expressed their apprehensions about war, seemed to feel that war was bad, even though they didn't seem to know quite what war was . . . One child said: "I saw a war on TV . . ."
>
> One technique (for stimulating discussion after stories) which is fairly simple is the use of puppets. Commercial puppets may be used or if one wishes to be a little more creative, one could raid the vegetable bin and use potatoes. Using an apple corer, you can make a hole at one end with enough room for your finger. Add a scrap of cloth or a handkerchief for clothes, thumb tacks or buttons for the eyes, yarn for the hair, and you have a puppet which may be anything you wish it to be or the children want it to be. A whole family of puppets can be used to act out a story or to role-play in conflict situations set up by the teacher. Most children love to engage the puppets in physical conflict . . . [Genser 1970, "Puppets and *Potatoes, Potatoes.*"*]

A possibility for future exploration in the use of peace materials was suggested by the report of a pre-school mother: "My four-year-old was watching Captain Kangaroo, his favorite program on TV. Quite unexpectedly, the Captain ended his program by saying: 'And, boys and girls, when you play with toys today, would you make them toys of peace.' " (Captain Kangaroo, CBS-TV, December 2, 1970.)

*[Editor's headings in brackets.]

Peace Education at a University Convocation

Gaining momentum from earlier activities of the Pre-School Project, the Center was invited in cooperation with the College of Education, Wayne State University, to plan a symposium on the Effects of War and Violence on Children for June 30, 1971.

The following article appeared the next morning in the *Detroit Free Press:*

*We Teach Our Kids Violence**
by Eileen Foley, Free Press Staff Writer

This article removed to comply with copyright regulations. It appeared originally in the Detroit Free Press, 1 July 1971.

Postscript

In describing a program of peace education for children in the pre-school years, it is clear how much work needs to be done. The Center for Teaching About Peace and War has developed a number of substantive programs such as "The Multi-School Project" for junior high and high school students; "Crucial World Issues" seminars for high school students and their teachers; workshops on "nonviolence" for adult community groups; a number of "Peace Education" workshops; and most recently a transnational conference "China — New U. S. and Canadian Perspectives" co-sponsored with the University of Windsor. Currently, a seminar, "Understanding Aggression and Conflict for Teachers and Parents of Young Children," is being planned to fill the lack of peace education in the elementary grades.

Moreover, the mental health approach adds a new dimension and offers endless possibilities for innovative effort. It is indeed a hopeful sign that practical programs about creative conflict-resolution find a ready response at all levels in the community. The committee for the Pre-School Project invites you to join its efforts in this important program.

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Contributors

Esther Callard, PhD, Chairman, Department of Family and Consumer Resources, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. The co-op alumnae discussion leaders happened to be professionally trained in the fields of social work, psychology, and early childhood education, in addition to their experiences as mothers.

Joseph Fischhoff, MD, Child Psychiatrist, Children's Hospital of Michigan and Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Wayne State University, Detroit Michigan.

Lillian Genser, Director of the Center for Teaching About Peace and War since 1969, and Associate of the Center for Urban Studies, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

William C. Morse, PhD, Professor of Psychology and Education, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. His was one of a number of workshops in an all-day, city-wide conference. About 65 co-op mothers attended his workshop. The excerpts are from tape transcriptions.

Frank Parcells, MD, Child Psychiatrist in private practice, Grosse Pointe, Michigan and Adjunct Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. His workshop involved about 40 teachers. The excerpts are from tape transcriptions.

Harold Wright, MD, Child Psychiatrist, Director of Hawthorn Center, Northville, Michigan. His workshop involved about 80 teachers, representing a variety of private nursery schools and day care centers, including several kindergartens.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Center Associates, under the leadership of Mrs. Alfred Glancy, Jr., without whom the Pre-School Project and this description of it would not have been possible.

We extend special thanks for the ideas and skills of Mrs. John Nelson, Mrs. William Rioux, and Mrs. Douglas Sargent.

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